FBI rejected one Nixon bid

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The FBI, which under L. Patrick Gray was sympathetic to White House pressures from Richard M. Nixon and his staff, did reject one request to "soften" an adverse memorandum, according to the man who once was No. 3 at the bureau.

W. Mark Felt, former associate FBI director under J. Edgar Hoover and Gray, said Sunday that "several times" he had refused to obey orders or follow suggestions he thought were illegal.

Felt mentioned one example during an interview on CBS's' "Face the Nation." He said John Dean, then the White House counsel, "asked me to have the report on the Dita Beard memorandum softened. I told him 'no.'"

Dita Beard was a Washington lobbyist for ITT in 1971. She authored a memo to her superiors stating the Republicans decided to hold their 1972 convention in San Diego in part because ITT promised a secret contribution to Nixon's campaign. ITT owns a San Diego hotel. The convention site was moved to Miami after the Beard memo was disclosed.

Felt said he was making his television appearance despite advice from friends that his statements might be used against him if he is eventually indicted for approving 1972 warrantless break-ins at the headquarters of the Weather Underground.

He admitted approving the break-ins but justified the orders because the Weather Underground had taken credit for "hundreds of arsons and bombings."